

Literary analysis of hunger games book 1



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Susan Collins's book the "Hunger Games" the character of Katniss Everdeen is considered by many to be an example of gender role reversal. Though Katniss does portray many traits that may be considered masculine in and of themselves, she also portrays feminine traits. Her possession of these feminine even instinctually motherly traits steer my opinion to the thought that these traits are more due to her position in her family than to that of a girl who is tomboyish in nature.

In this paper I will show that the behaviors of Katniss Everdeen are traits of an eldest child of a single parent household by assuming the roles of both mother and father as opposed to simply being characterized examples of gender role reversal. The book starts out explaining the back story of Katniss, her father who she was very close with died in a mine explosion five years before the book's present day.

Now she is left with a mother who is so overwhelmed with grief that she can barely function and a little sister who needs her to be raised.

While her father was alive their relationship seems to be very similar to that of a father with no sons who tends to teach their daughter all they would teach a son, I know this relationship very well. While fathers love their daughters they seem to have this primal need for a son, an heir. Similar to other eldest female children when their fathers unexpectedly die, she had to step up and help her mother with the family, and in her case as is in some cases she has to be the parent.

While I understand Katniss's frustration over her mother's actions after her father's death, this is her reality and she deals with it and takes care of her

family. The very first example of this new parental role in the book is the when Katniss narrates “ The last thing I need is another mouth to feed” (3). Already we are seeing Katniss as the parental provider, she doesn't say that the cat is the last thing they need, she says it's the last thing she needs. Then she goes into talking about preparing the food, she has killed.

Using the hunting skills her father had taught her, although hunting is considered a masculine activity, she hunts to feed her family to supplement their food stores due to shortages. Any spoils from her hunts left after supplying her family she sells in the “ Hob” the black market (5), earning money to support her family as a father would. Even before the games begin Katniss begins to show concern for this young girl Rue another tribute, maybe it is Rue's age she was after about the age of Katniss's little sister Prim.

During the games there is a point where Katniss thinks that one of the kills she heard could have been Rue, you can hear the concern in her thoughts. In a game of survival where everyone is your enemy, Katniss bonds with Rue and tries to protect this little girl. They snuggle together for warmth at night and teach each other to survive by day. When Rue is killed Katniss with an almost maternal rage immediately kills Rue's killer, this is the first actual kill for Katniss. Then she defies the rules and mourns the death of Rue having a makeshift funeral for her and a song from Rues district. This was definitely a turning point for Katniss, she once again in her life had to block out emotion and focus on survival. At this point it was no longer a game of evasion for her it turn to a kill or be kill.

Never the less, she maintained her compassion. Which was evident with Peeta, even though she was not sure of his truest intention when he was injured and being hunted she cared for him and protected him. Any other tribute may have left him for dead, but she didn't. She tended to his wound, feed him, and defended him from the careers that were out to kill him risking her own life. Her actions are like that of an eldest child caring for younger or helpless needy siblings, I know personally I treat everyone in need of help as if they were one of my younger siblings. These are not traits of gender reversal these are traits of a protector a provider a parent.

When our children wrong us we forgive and still focus on their protection and safety. When our children are in danger we find amazing strengths we never knew we possessed to protect them. When they hunger we find a way to feed them. Most importantly we survive the harshest of times, overcome the greatest of obstacles and sacrifice ourselves to return to those who need us most. Katniss is no different all she did she did to return to her family to ensure their survival. Without the parental traits she possesses the outcome of the Hunger Games may have been very different. But because of these traits she not only will return to her family she has saved Peeta's life and may have changes life in Panam for ever.